

The Sun.

BOOKS AND THE BOOK WORLD

SUBSCRIPTION Weekly, one year.....\$1.00
Canada...\$1.50; other countries...\$2.00

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1919.

ARIELLE.

By Edgar Lee Masters.

ARIELLE! Arielle!
Gracious and fanciful,
Laughing and joyous!
Arielle girlish, queenly, majestic;
Deep eyed for memory,
Pensive for dreams.
Arielle crowned with the light of thought,
Mystical, reverent,
Musing on the splendor of life,
And the blossom of love
Pressed into her hands—
Arielle!

Music awakes in the hall!
Shadowy pools and glistening willows,
And elfin shapes amid silver shadows
Are made into sound!
Arielle listens with hidden eyes,
Sitting amid her treasures,
A presence like a lamp of alabaster,
A yearning gardenia
That broods in a shaft of light . . .
Arielle clapping hands and running
About her rooms,
Arranging cloths of gold and jars of crystal,
And vases of ruby cloisonne.
Arielle matching blues and reds:
Pomegranates, apples in bowls of jade.
Arielle reposing, lost in Plato,
In the contemplation of Agni.
Arielle, the cup to her lips,
A laughing Thalia!
Arielle!

The breath of morning moves through the case-
ment window—
Arielle taking the cool of it on her brow,
And the ecstasy of the robin's song into her heart.
Arielle in prayer at dawn
Laying hands upon secret powers:
Lead me in the path of love to my love.
Arielle merging the past and the present,
As light increases light—
Arielle adored—
Arielle!

Copyright, 1919, by Edgar Lee Masters.

AN ENGLISH ENTENTE.

SOME weeks ago we printed letters received by Mr. BARRETT H. CLARK from English authors respecting the opportunities they saw for effecting an "intellectual entente" between England and America. The letters spoke for themselves and we are not going to comment on them. But it has long been in our thoughts that the surest step toward an intellectual entente between England and America would be an improved acquaintance on the part of Englishmen with American writing.

It is true that ARNOLD BENNETT had to introduce THEODORE DREISER to Mr. DREISER's fellow-countrymen. And whatever disagreement there may be about much of DREISER's work, few will now dispute the extraordinary worth of *Sister Carrie*.

In spite of this instance we believe Englishmen generally are vastly more ignorant of contemporary American writing than Americans in general are of contemporary English writing.

All the English writers of any distinction—and some of none—have American readers. The living American writers who have English readers can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Some Englishmen have read novels by WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS. This year, the English publisher, HEINEMANN, aided by Mr. GALSWORTHY, made a famous shove with the novels of JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER. As a result *Java Head* got reviewed from London to Manchester and was actually read by a section of the English public. By concentration on one American writer a year, heavy publicity and impassioned effort it might be possible gradually to penetrate the English consciousness with BOOTH TARKINGTON, MARY S. WATTS, WILLA SIBERT CATHER, ELLEN GLASGOW, CLARENCE BUDINGTON KELLAND and a couple of dozen others whose work is no whit inferior to that of ARNOLD BENNETT, EDEN PHILLIPOTS, and other English writers perfectly well known and habitually read on this side of the ocean.

The difference in receptivity is something to marvel at. Is LEONARD MERRICK a little overlooked in America? By Jove, something must be done about

it! All the other Englishmen write prefaces for MERRICK's novels, which are then brought out here with a bang. America at once puts MERRICK on its literary map. Does anything like that happen to an American writer in London? It does not, or did not until HERGESHEIMER's English debut this year.

The machinery for securing for an English writer his full American public is perfect. We are not allowed to forget Mr. WELLS for a moment. We get GILBERT CANNAN with pomp and circumstance. A new English novelist quite naturally feels he is the heir to all the ages. But an American novelist, contemplating England, is timid as a mouse. Through he compass the walls of this Jericho seven times to the sound of trumpets they will not fall for him over there. The only American writers who are sure of English audiences are those whose stories contain the elements of widest appeal and whose popularity can triumph over an insularity unparalleled on the face of the globe. GENE STRATTON-PORTER sells heavily in England. ETHEL DELL sells heavily here. The difference is that we read ST. JOHN G. ERVINE. They have never heard of CHARLES G. NORRIS's *Salt: The Education of Griffith Adams*.

We look forward with pleasure to the prospect of seeing some day literary letters from America in English pages devoted to books and reading. These letters will tell, week after week, of the latest triumphs of English writers in America—no, in "the daughter country."

MARY SETS THE TABLE.

By David Morton.

SHE brings such gay and shining things to pass,
With delicate, deft fingers that are learned
In ways of silverware and cup and glass,
Arrayed in ordered patterns, trimly turned—
And never guesses how this subtle ease
Is older than the oldest tale we tell,
This gift that guides her through such tricks as these—
And my delight in watching her, as well.

She thinks not how this art with spoon and plate
Is one with ancient women baking bread:
An epic heritage come down of late
To slender hands and dear, delightful head—
How Trojan housewives vie in serving me,
Where Mary sets the table things for tea.

Copyright, 1919, by David Morton.

STILL THE BEST OF THEIR KIND.

WE found ourselves wondering the other day if we should not occasionally make room in our list on this page of *The Best of Their Kind* for an old book. There is nothing in the list's title that would prevent the inclusion of such a story as *The Moonstone*, by WILKIE COLLINS, which is still, in our considered opinion, the finest mystery story we know of. Of course *The Moonstone* is much more than a mystery story, but the mystification of the reader is its predominant appeal. And, once in a while, to name some older book in this way, cheek by jowl with the best of the newest books, might be quite as serviceable to readers. If, for example, naming *The Moonstone* in this way should induce one single person who had not read it to do so, to his immense satisfaction, we would feel we had done a happy thing and a thing well worth doing.

Now we have spoken of this matter and we shall leave it to our readers and our own later impulse whether we revive an old book, from time to time, or not.

THE BEST OF THEIR KIND.

Mare Nostrum (Our Sea), by Vicente Blasco Ibanez. German submarine warfare in the Mediterranean. A novel as tremendous as his *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*.

The Old Madhouse, by William De Morgan. Lasting charm, and a mystery story so fine that even Mrs. De Morgan's final chapter cannot spoil it.

The Moon and Sixpence, by W. Somerset Maugham. Candid novel of a genius. "There are few men to whom love is the most important thing in the world, and they are not very interesting ones."

Mary Olivier: A Life, by May Sinclair. For those to whom introspection and memory are the breath of life.

A Woman's Woman, by Nalbro Bartley. An American family from 1901 to 1918. More truth than exaggeration.

Ramsey Milholland, by Booth Tarkington. An American boyhood matured into manhood by the events of 1917-18.

The Young Visitors, by Daisy Ashford. A nine-year-old's novel of a social climber.

The Re-Creation of Brian Kent, by Harold Bell Wright. For those who enjoyed the author's other books.

The Librarian's Corner

CONDUCTED BY
FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE.

A CHINESE LIBRARY.

THERE was once an Emperor (says an ancient Chinese chronicle) who conceived himself to be the greatest man who had ever lived.

His name was Shih Hungti.

The Emperor Shih was surrounded by courtiers who flattered him until he was no longer content merely to be the greatest man who had ever lived. Greatness alone seemed to him like an empty vase, lacking the precious ointment with which it should have been filled.

So the Emperor Shih, first of the Ch'in dynasty, decided he would be not only the greatest man who had ever lived but the wisest.

Now at that time, more than 2,000 years ago, there were many wise men. There had been wise men for thousands of years, and they had written many books. In these books was contained all the wisdom of the world, and these books were preserved in many great libraries, where the poor as well as the rich might read them and themselves become wise.

Before Alexandria.

The greatest of all these libraries (says my ancient chronicler) was the royal library itself. In it were stored thousands of volumes of history, of geography, of poetry, of philosophy and of works on the arts and sciences. At its head was the T'ai Shih, the chief librarian, among whose duties was that of recording the actions of the Emperor. He had for his secretary the Nei Shih. For his assistants he had the Hsiao Shih, who recorded the important events of the country; the Wai Shih, who kept the archives and the geographical records; the Yu Shih, who watched and recorded the actions of the officials of lower rank than the Emperor, and the Hsiao Yin Jen.

Besides the royal library there were no less than 120 libraries maintained by the feudal princes of the Flowery Kingdom. It was in these as well as in the royal library itself that the great Confucius found wisdom which he recorded in his *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

Now when the Son of Heaven, Shih Hungti, looked about him and saw that there were in his Celestial Empire these great collections of wisdom (continues the ancient chronicle) he despaired. For it would take a lifetime to master it all, and few could hope, like Confucius, to spend a lifetime in the accumulation of wisdom.

So Shih Hungti ordered that all the books in the royal library be burned, except the *Yi Chang*, or *Book of Changes*, and works on agriculture, medicine and divination. It was then ordered by the Emperor that the literati be exterminated, and wherever one was reputed to possess the wisdom of the ancients, him the Emperor's vassals slew. And so in the provinces and principalities, as far as the authority of Shih Hungti was recognized, there was a burning of books and a slaying of wise men. And when he had come to the end of these and found there were still dukes and princes who held their lands and their libraries as independent of the Emperor, upon those he made war until he had conquered their provinces or they yielded to his authority, and their libraries he also burned and had their literati put to the sword.

When Books Came Back.

Thus it came to pass that in the Celestial Empire there was none acclaimed so wise as the great Emperor Shih Hungti. And they called the empire which he thus founded China, or the Empire of Ch'in, that being the name he took, signifying his greatness and his wisdom.

Now there was in that time in China (says the chronicle) a man named Liu Pan. He was a soldier and unlearned in books, but it was to him a great scandal that all wisdom should be possessed by one man. To the Emperor Ch'in he refused to yield his sword, but made war upon him, and in forty-and-three years he had conquered all the provinces of the Celestial Empire, and him the princes and the dukes acclaimed as emperor in place of Shih Hungti. And he called himself Han, signifying one who conquers, and to him came the wise men, for not all had fallen under the sword of Shih Hungti. They asked the Emperor to restore the royal library, for many books had been hidden away.

"I won my empire on horseback and not by books," replied Liu Pan.

"Yes, but you cannot rule it on horseback," responded the wise men. So Liu Pan, who knew he was not the greatest and did not desire to be the wisest man who ever lived, restored the libraries. And the dynasty of Han lasted 400 years and wisdom and poetry flourished in all that time.